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Creativity of the Narrative of Suffering of Korean A-Bomb Survivors:

How reconciliation and redress might be achieved

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Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to consider how the sufferings caused by Japan's colonization and invasion would be eased in an East Asian context and how the transnational solidarity among the citizens could be possible without getting caught up in excessive nationalism and ethnocentrism. This short essay will take up the experiences of hardships and creative resistance of Korean A-bomb survivors

Looking into the politico-cultural landscape in East Asia today, we easily realize the heightened tension among Korea, China and Japan. There are increasingly stronger anti-Japanese sentiments in Korea and China. Meanwhile the ultra-nationalistic Abe Government stimulates the latent anti-Chinese, anti-Korean xenophobic sentiments in Japan. In September 2012, anti-Japanese riots took place in as many as 57 Chinese cities, where more than 80,000 people held an anti-Japanese rally taking part in a raid of Japanese affiliated companies, shops and restaurants. In Korea we saw the constant anti-Japan demonstrations on the *Dokto* and military comfort woman problem. According to the 2016 joint survey by Japanese and Korean NGOs, 38% of the Korean respondents are thinking that Japan is the greatest military threat to Korea.

In the modern history of East Asia, The Empire of Japan had exercised its hegemony over other nations in Asia. It colonized Korea at the early beginning of the last century. It also invaded China with much bloodshed and set up a puppet regime in the northeastern part of China, the Manchukuo. This history caused indescribable sufferings and great animosity and resentment among the victimized people in East Asia. It clearly leads to the present anti-Japanese sentiment in Korean and Chinese

society.

Then, how could these sufferings caused by the state violence be healed? How would we the citizens of East Asia come to mutual reconciliation? Here is one important point to consider about reconciliation. We are not talking about reconciliation of the involved nation-states but seeking for reconciliation of the ordinary citizens in East Asia.

The 20th. Century is characterized by the absolute presence of the nation-state as polity. The global politico-economic and socio-cultural order is sharpened and developed by the nation-state system. The World War or the Olympic game, the World Cup of the foot ball are the good examples. People are “essentially” categorized/divided into certain nation-states. Thus we are made “naturally” to belong to one of them and shout for a national victory over the other. In the same way, we were made “naturally” to oppress and kill the other on the battlefield, against those whom we otherwise had no personal animosity. This violence has been and continues to be justified by the state. Millions of people in Asia became victims to such state violence of the Japanese Empire.

But we should not run away from the truth that it was the ordinary Japanese citizens who used direct violence against other citizens in the war of the nation-state system. If we absolve them from their responsibility by saying that only the state and war leaders are to blame for those sufferings, reconciliation among the ordinary citizens in East Asia can never be realized. More than seventy years have passed since Japan's defeat, and many war-victims died without any compensation or apology from Japan; and yet, some survivors began to speak out about their suffering to restore their violated human dignity. How can their voices be heard and the lost human dignity restored? And lastly, how might the reconciliation between these citizens is reached?

Two remedies

The 20th. century saw various forms of state violence such as multisided, ethnocide, rape, torture, forced labour, sex slavery and so forth. These organized state violence severely damaged potential social bonds within/between communities. It is not that easy to heal the wounds inflicted upon them, because the perpetrators' acts were legitimatised by the state and exerted beyond personal will.

Generally speaking there are two different kinds of remedy for the victims to restore

their violated human rights. One is to use the modern court system (whether domestic or international) to prosecute the perpetrators. The other is to seek for alternative solutions of disputes (ADR) outside the court system.

Those who adopted the first remedy were, for example, Korean sex slaves for Japanese soldiers. They stood up for investigation into the truth, reparation and punishment of the criminals. Their cases were first brought to Tokyo District Court in 1991. There were dozens of cases heard in Japanese court, plaintiffs of which were Korean and Chinese war victims.

While on the other hand, the Apartheid victims in South Africa employed the second remedy to form the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC). Though they suffered serious human right violation by the state security forces during the White racist regime, they did not use the court system, instead, they organized the open forum where the victimized as well as victimizers get together to confess what they did and how they were treated before the public. The ultimate goal of this experiment was to heal the deep social wounds inflicted upon all the South African people whether the black, the white or so called the colored by the Apartheid regime and to make reconciliation for the future generation.

In the next, we will examine the validity of these two remedies in an East Asian context.

Korean A-bomb survivors as war victim

The modern nation-state depends upon dispute-settlement abilities of the judicial system for maintaining social order and substantiating social justice. That is why some war victims brought their suffering claims to court and tried to prove criminal acts of the state violence in court. Here we will take up the experiences of Korean A-bomb survivors in order to consider the validity of the remedy by the court system.

Korean A-bomb survivors were the first non-Japanese foreign group to sue the Japanese state for redress. The first case was brought to Fukuoka District Court in 1971. There have been more than twenty court cases brought against the state so far.

Before looking into how the Japanese courts treated their claims, it is necessary to explain briefly about them. Who are the Korean A-bomb sufferers? One A-bomb was dropped on Hiroshima on August 6, 1945. It killed 160,000 people instantly and injured

260,000. Out of the 420,000 total *hibakusha* (A-bomb sufferers), Korean *hibakusha* accounted for 50,000 with 30,000 killed and 20,000 survived. Out of the 20,000 survivors, 5,000 remained in Japan and 15,000 returned home. Now there are only 2,500 *hibakusha* still alive in both South Korea, aged and in delicate health.

Words are not adequate to describe how hard their lives have been. Most of them were so afflicted with aftereffects caused by radioactive fallout that they were out of formal/regular employment. They could not afford to give their children proper education and medication. It led to the vicious cycle of poverty and sickness. They were obliged to live on the edge of the post-war Korean society.

Here are a few examples of hardship of Korean *hibakusha*. Ms.C.M, living at an informal settlement in Seoul died at her thirties. She suffered from A-bomb in early childhood. Since then she became frightened of any kind of light. She shut herself in the closet until her death. Mr. I.N, who was kidnapped and brought to the military factory in Nagasaki by force to become a *hibakusha*, left a will saying that his body must be placed in front of the Japanese Embassy in Seoul until Japanese government promises to make apology and reparation for them. Ms. I.M, whose baby was killed instantly in Hiroshima, committed suicide by taking agrochemicals when demonstrating near the Japanese Embassy in protest against the Japanese policy to settle the Korean A-bomb sufferer question by throwing a sop money at them. Their immeasurable sufferings and great resentment have remained unresolved. How could their wounds be healed?

Contrary to how the Korean A-bomb *hibakusha* were discarded and ignored, Japanese government enacted several laws directed at *hibakusha* living in Japan. First, it helped them with their whole medical expenses in 1957. Second, it gave out Japanese *hibakusha* benefits package in 1968. It enacted the A-bomb survivors' support law in 1995. But Japanese government did not apply them to the *hibakusha* living in Korea.

Remedies by the court and law

The Korean *hibakusha* saw the Japanese government' actions as irrational and unjust. They therefore brought their grievance to the Japanese court and sought a judicial remedy. 46 *hibakusha* living in Pyongtaek took a class action lawsuit

against the state and the Mitsubishi Heavy Industry Ltd. in 1995. They questioned responsibility of kidnapping, slave labor no payment, suffering from A-bomb, systematic neglect and discard after the war, and discriminative enforcement of policy. They came to the Hiroshima District/High court one after the other and gave testimony relating to their personal hardship and suffering. They unanimously demanded fair treatment, reparation and apology from the Japanese government and Mitsubishi. They were kidnapped when they were 21-22 years old. Today all the original plaintiffs passed away.

Were their voices heard in court? The ruling of the Hiroshima District court of 1999 unequivocally dismissed all the plaintiffs' arguments out of hand and cleared the state and the Mitsubishi of any responsibility. It avoided making a fact finding about state violence and illegal acts of the Mitsubishi. Vast amount of testimony given in court could not be heard by the judges, who did not recognize them as meaningful evidence. They were just recorded without any interpretation or judgment in the ruling. It suggests a cunning system of irresponsibility in the post-war Japanese society that blinks the past and exonerates the victimizers from liability. It looked like a kind of fail-safe device to defend the state violence.

First, a final ruling by the Imperial Supreme court, determined before 1945, still survived as powerful precedent. Its logic is a simple syllogism; the Great Empire of Japan was the Emperor's state. The Emperor, the Divine, never errs. The state, therefore never commits misconducts. The verdict exempted the Japanese state from any legal responsibility for compensation. This revenant old ruling still stands in the present Japanese court system. Referring to this precedent, almost all court decisions rejected reparation claims by the Chinese and Korean War sufferers declaring that there is no proper legal basis for complaint.

This idea of state immunity took root in the present court system and has been used to reject reparation claims of the Asian war victims. There is more to it than that. Japan-Korea Treaty of 1965 played another role of fail-safe device for defending the state violence. Two countries agreed to resign a claim right reciprocally. This Treaty was deemed to be a final settlement of the past colonization to Japan. In addition, the Japanese Government enacted Act No.144 of 1965 at the same moment of concluding the Treaty because it was apprehended that the Treaty was ambiguous about the

status of the personal claims, although it clearly precluded the claims by/against the state. The Act No.144 of 1965 was to dissolve a personal Korean claim right in Japan completely. But it was not the end. The state has another strong card. It is the prescription/ statute of limitation that shut the door on the Asian war victims. Even if some Japanese military companies like Mitsubishi had serious faults of slave labor and arrears of pay, they were acquitted of charges because of a 10-year prescription and 20 year statute of limitation. Due to these various immunity systems of state violence, the remedy by law/in court can never be helpful at all to the Asian war sufferers.

Remedies outside the court and law

The past 'injustice' caused by the state has been and still is for the most part not held responsible in Japan. The court and law, which are to ensure basic the justice and human rights in a civil society, takes part in the cover-ups for state injustice. Then, how could the Asian war victims make their voices heard and redress the Japanese state injustice? Here we have to look for an alternative way outside the court. This circumstance reminds us of fair-enough findings by Malinowski. He, in observing crimes and customs in savage society, paid attention to how the social order could be maintained not only through the legal channels but other channels of social norms and practices. It suggested the limits of the scope of the court and law. The court can only handle a tiny part of the everyday world with peculiar conventions and rules, according to which, all the spoken and written evidences are to be highly hierarchized. Written documents with logical coherence are placed on the top. In contrast, at the bottom of the hierarchy are spoken narratives that appear with inconsistency. Officially printed materials are therefore regarded as striking proof of history, while the oral hard luck stories or emotional expressions based on personal memory of the past are marginalized and never adopted as meaningful evidence. Korean *hibakusha*'s personal experiences of being deceived or assaulted were narrated in tears in the court. But it was not taken up in the juridical ruling. Even if they had a perfect memory and gave detailed testimony relating to their specific sufferings, it was never identified as 'objective fact' because it was not documented.

However, written documents are also hierarchized. The formal document, especially

issued by the central government, is viewed the most valuable, followed by the local government and other public institutions. Under the first-class evidence, private documents such as diary, correspondence and memo are placed second-class. They are also made up of numerous concentric layers of 'credibility', which are determined by accessibility to the state power. In this discursive order of court, post-cards or diaries, written by the ordinary Koreans who were swept to the periphery of the Empire (Most Korean *hibakusha* were belonging to the lower class in the marginalized society.) are given the lowest credence. In such a space, it is simply impractical to rectify the state injustice of the past. Though it loses touch with realities of the everyday life world of the ordinary, this hirarchization of knowledge in court is closely related to epistemology of modern human/social sciences including history. That is, the court and science system of knowledge have supported the state in silencing voices of the war victims. The following discourse is, therefore, still rampant in Japan: that there are no formal documents that establish the Japanese Imperial Government was directly-involved in institutionalization of the sex slavery for soldiers. Historical positivism concludes, for this reason, that Japanese state is immune to any responsibility of the past injustice. May there still be an opportunity to find ways for redress?

A Historical Challenge of South African TRC

Next, we will consider the potentiality and possibility of narrative of sufferings resisting enormous power of silencing the voices. For this discussion we will take up a challenging experience of South African society.

The Apartheid regime had instilled members of a society with racial hatred and torn them apart along a color line. Antagonism between Black and White was made perpetuated and institutionalized by enactment of a series of racist laws including Immorality Act or Pass Laws. It divided and ruled the Black people by establishing puppet Bantustan states at the same time. State violence was exercised against its enemy, who strongly opposed the Apartheid regime. Security police arrested, tortured, and sometimes murdered them. Black activists, other way round, organized counter-attacks on them. Thus, South African society saw an unlimited circulation of mutual violence. Formal prosecutions in criminal court might lead to a social chaos with

animosity and revenge where people are cutting each other's throats.

Confronting this difficult situation, Nelson Mandela, the First President of a newly-born South Africa state, brought forth one resolution to seek reconciliation and forgiveness based on narratives of suffering. He set up the TRC (Truth and Reconciliation Commission) instead of a special court to punish the perpetrator.

TRC itself came into existence in many parts of the world in the past thirty years. There emerged more than twenty TRCs operating in Chile, Guatemala, Sierra Leone, East Timor and so forth. The South African TRC, however, has a unique approach to redress state injustice of the past. It reevaluates non-court system for resolution of disputes developed by indigenous local communities, where victims and perpetrators directly meet and speak what happened to them. The South African TRC was established in 1995, one year after advent of a new ANC administration led by Mandela. He enacted the Promotion of National Unity and Reconciliation Act delegating redress activities to the TRC chaired by Rev. Tutu, a Nobel laureate for peace prize. The TRC covers egregious human rights violations from March 1, 1960 of Sharpeville Massacre to December 5, 1993 of formulation of a new national constitution. It energetically organized public hearings at 80 urban centers or more and more than 20000 suffering cases were heard. In the hearings, victims spoke out of their own suffering experiences on torture, kidnapping, murder of family members by the state institutions and at the same time, the victimizer also confessed how they performed their act. The TRC completed all the duties in 1998 and identified 400 victimizers as serious offender of human right violation. Based on this judgment, it granted amnesty for some of them, and offered national compensation to the others.

Participants of the public hearing held at every township across the country, were enthusiastic about the reaffirmation of their local culture with which to settle the disputes, which could make both victim and perpetrator live together in the same community. Their oral narratives on suffering were more often than not inconsistent in logic and emotionalized so much. But the TRC officers took them as they were and recorded them faithfully. TRC activities, as Mandela said, were actually a move toward establishing a new human rights culture with a universal idea. At the same time, it embodied customary concept of justice in each local community. The South African TRC accommodated these two orientations all at once, which gave it a unique potentiality

for reconciliation.

We would consider the power of these narratives of suffering in the next.

Power of narrative

What makes South African TRC so special is its clear position to have no negative opinions about inconsistent oral lived narratives on suffering. They would be dismissed as untrustful, emotional statement in the conventional court of modern law, where consistent objective statement supported by formal documentation and physical evidence is given supreme value. But South African TRC has overturned this premise and recreated its value system on Truth and justice.

This unique idea is expressed in the final report. It declares that the ultimate goal of the TRC activities is to contribute to the process of reconciliation by ensuring that the truth about the past included the validation of the individual subjective experiences of people who had previously been silenced or voiceless in the modern nation-state court system. Narratives of suffering, whether consistent or inconsistent, logical or emotional, are recognized as a potential mediator for social healing and reconciliation.

In practicing each hearing, comprehensive, personal and detailed narratives were recorded, which were abandoned/ignored as 'foreign to this care' in a more conventional court of law. They were people's perceptions, stories, myths and experiences. Timothy Garton Ash, an Oxford historian, recognized them as "the most promising" way – a way that offers "history lessons" as an alternative to political trials, uncovering what happened and identifying lessons for the future. Thus, oral narratives of suffering were brought into the heart of reconciliation practices. They become the weapon of the weak to redress the state injustice of the past.

Albie Sachs, a South African judge, introduced a unique distinction of truth. One is 'microscope truth' which is factual, verifiable and can be documented and proved. The other is 'dialogue truth', which is social truth, the truth of experience that is established through interaction, discussion and debate. In the world of microscope truth, fact and result that come alive are given top priority in maintaining social order, while in the latter's world, a process in which dialogue truth is narrated, created and shared is considered most important. It is in this process that we could achieve redress

and reconciliation.

Two types of truth correspond closely with two options of remedy of the human rights violation by state violence. The first option of court and law to restore justice by punishment for offender is based on microscope type of truth. On the other hand, dialogue truth supports the second option outside the mainstream modern legal court system to heal and reconcile through TRC practices.

Stylized narratives of suffering

The South African TRC aims to redress and heal serious personal sufferings and collective social trauma caused by state violence in the past all at once. Individual oral narratives are put at the core of its activities. When individual victim requests positive measures of redemption about the past suffering, there emerges a community of suffering. In this community, their personal oral narrative would be repeated and stylized. Though each narrative of the Apartheid victim must be different in its content and the extent of suffering, it was standardized and integrated into the master narrative of making a national hero/heroine for the new South African society. They utter forcibly a stylized story so that all the suffering would serve as a foundation for creating a new human rights culture in South Africa.

There are phenomena kindred to this in the narratives of the Korean *hibakusha*. When we made life-history interviews with them for preparation of lawsuit, it was necessary to specify individual suffering. We wanted to know in detail about: when and how they were kidnapped during the wartime, how they were forced to work and live at the Mitsubishi factory compound, how they suffered and survived the A-bomb, and how they left Japan for home. In this process, we realized a strong tendency for them to standardize the narratives about the past experiences of suffering. A standardized narratives of the second group from Pyongtaek goes as follow.

They were shown a requisition paper by the village headmen and brought by force to a Japanese owned hotel in October 1944. On the following day, they were ordered to gather at a primary school compound to see Japanese policemen, village headmen and men with the Mitsubishi uniform. They were promised that a remittance would be sent to their home family in the amount of one half of the monthly salary. They

were brought to Pusan by railway wagon, always violently watched by military police officers, even to Hiroshima without knowing where they were going. In the Mitsubishi factory, they were treated as a slave worker, staying behind barbed wire, and being kept under surveillance. They had only two days off in a month, whenever they went out someone was put on to watch them. The factory management heavily censored correspondence with home family, they were allowed to write that they were OK. Other discrimination such as poor food or wanton insult always angered them. On the fatal day of August 6, they were injured in the blast but received a low priority of medical treatment. Without any assistance or instruction from the Mitsubishi, they escaped from Hiroshima and returned home by themselves.

They shared the same narrative of suffering of the past. There were, however, different stories in the early interviews with original 46 plaintiffs. The original individual memories were not consistent with the standardized collective memory with regards to: who they were with in a primary school compound, what they were promised, how they were brought to Hiroshima, how much they were watched and discriminated, and how they behaved after bombed. As a matter of course it is quite natural for them to have imperfect memory about what they did more than fifty years ago. But the microscope truth based on written history can never be tolerant of this kind of imperfection. According to this truth, 'true history' is composed of objective, consistent and inflexible facts backed up by formal written evidence. In this discursive world, oral narrative of the ordinary sufferer is placed in the lowest class of credibility.

There is another channel to standardize different personal memories. It is embedded within their everyday life world. Through this channel, inconsistent stories are integrated into a master narrative based on collective memory of violent kidnapping, slave labor, discrimination, surveillance and oppression. An individual experience, which cannot go hand-in-hand with it, was excluded. Some of them told us that they felt so happy in Hiroshima to be able to eat polished rice three times a day. Other nostalgically recalled that they had nice Japanese friends, with whom they went on a jaunt to the Miyajima on holiday. These personal memories clashed with their master narrative of suffering and were therefore erased from their collective memory. Personal experiences of suffering began to lose touch with collective memory.

Fascination with differentiation

This kind of standardization of narrative, erasing individual personal experiences, became a target of sharp criticism. It called for a dramatic shift away of frame of reference for history and society. That is, from macro-structure of political economy to micro-interaction of everyday lives, from collective movement to individual practice, or from the above to below in general. By so doing, we could establish a new view of history and society free from an ossified modernistic one. Its motivation was quite justifiable. Challenges from 'new History' or 'Cultural Studies, caused a strong shock to social movement as well as to social sciences. Those who felt discomfort with stylized discourse and patterned image of victim/perpetrator accepted this criticism against standardization with sympathy. Rewriting history according to this new perspective was promoted in post-colonial studies. For example, in studies of colonization history of Africa, some historians criticized stereotype dichotomy of the oppressor/oppressed and tried to deconstruct it. They focused on human affliction, conflict, challenge and love with native people by re-reading their private correspondences and diaries. Collective experience of colonial administrator was thus differentiated into individual unique living experiences. The same change was applied to the African side. Views regarding the roles played historically by the traitors and collaborators were also revised through differentiating their collective experiences. There was hidden agony in his heart as well as political calculation to be a collaborator. Some social historian shifted the focus of history from homogenized faceless category to heterogenized individuals with personality.

This turn was also confirmed in the communities of marginalized minority in Japan. Liberal socio-cultural studies shed the stereotyped-image of the discriminated, cursed with severe discrimination and indescribable poverty, tough people with flexible life-strategy, fighting discrimination and oppression with unconquerable will. Personal practice, thought and passion, which do not answer to the master image, had been excluded from narratives of suffering and finally silenced as noise. But a new historical perspective legitimized multitudinous personal experiences. It denounced stylized discourses and standardization of experience.

Here we will turn back to the narratives of Asian war victim. The method of new
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history insisted that personal memory of the past suffering should not be generalized into the master narrative of victimization. Then, multitudinous, differentiated, fragmented and inconsistent narratives of personal suffering experience of each Korean *hibakusha* should be accepted as it is. In this, their collective war experience such as violent kidnapping, slave labor, being A-bombed, escape with their neck to home, and post-war life with unspeakable hardships was individualized and personalized. This is a lived history for the oppressed, getting relief from institutionalized collective memory.

Fallacy of differentiation

The shift from homogenization to differentiation of narratives in activists' interests synchronized exactly with the paradigm change in the knowledge toward post-modern thinking, where standardized and fixed knowledge was replaced with differentiated and flexible one. This thinking deconstructed the essential a priori human categories such as race, ethnicity, generation and sex in the 1980's. In the current of this thought, claims to essential, natural existence would be bracketed and suspended for scrutiny; identities are considered to be on the move or hybrid and creolized. This deconstruction approach clearly emancipated us from modernistic control of human being, which mystifies social constructions produced by power with the fake appearance of 'natural essence'.

But we have to face up to the harsh reality of the Korean *hibakusha*, whose claims had been silenced by the Japanese state unjustly. If they surrender standardized collective memory of suffering and revive flexible, differentiated personal memory, how could they stand up against the state violence of Japan? Though they were in some circumstances talking in a chatty way about their personal experience of Hiroshima (including happy remembrances), Korean *hibakusha* replayed in other situations stylized narrative of collective memories as a master text. When I first interviewed with one *hibakusha* in Pyongtaek, he showed me a personal desire saying "there are a number of Mitsubishi vehicles in Seoul today, is it possible for Mitsubishi to donate even one used car to me?" He expressed his natural sentiments. But they were replaced with more politically correct collective narratives that they never want money or gifts from Japan, what they genuinely demand is to redress injustice and correct misguided

Japanese perception of history. Korean *hibakusha* made their personal experiences standardized into a seemingly nationalistic master narrative, as the victims of Apartheid did in South African TRC activities.

They had no option but to recreate collective, perfect memory as pointer to truth. As we already showed, Japanese state has systematically established a workable legal/political/social framework for silencing the voices of Asian war victims. In this situation, deconstruction of homogenized collective helped state's conspiracy to silence their claims. The so-called "deconstructionist" theorists are critical precisely of the discursive order of modern law that makes amorphous individual experiences and realities illegible.

Standardization and stylization of narratives of suffering played a crucial role in voicing strong objections to Japanese state violence and dragging it out into light. We have to directly face to deadly reality and listen to the replayed master narrative that accommodates painful grudge and profound fury. It could effectively counter the recent nationalistic instigation in Japanese society, which emphasized martyrdom and reedited collective memories of victimization. A memory of Hiroshima and famous discourse of 'the only nation in the world to be A-bombed' were used for this purpose.

Standardization of personal narratives should be regarded, in this sense, as the weapon of the weak. It should not be put under further scrutiny or treated unethically. We are urged to listen with humility to the recited and repeated master narrative of suffering.

Conclusion

Asian war sufferers like Korean *hibakusha* were systematically victimized during war and colonization, and have been legally abandoned by the post-war Japanese state for over seventy years. When they, just ordinary powerless peasants, decided to battle against Japanese state with enormous power, they developed a strategic remedy to edit their personal experiences into a collective master narrative so that their claims could be heard to the public and treated as strong evidence suggesting its injustice. Though seemingly generalized, they were never anonymous voices. They took root in their community of suffering and each collective claim had its own paradigm, a stock

of differentiated idioms from which individual sufferer expressed his/her personal suffering story.

Standardized memories and replayed narratives represented voices of this community. Korean *hibakusha* built claims on the rights around the norms of injustice of their own community. These claims were, therefore, alien to a totalitarian nationalism or universal standard of essential ethics but just based on everyday senses of right and wrong. As South African TRC showed us persuasively, narratives of suffering given by individuals who belong to different communities could open the way to ethnic/racial reconciliation. That is, everyday senses of justice, peculiar to each community, can easily cross the color line.

This reflects the growing importance of narratives by the sufferer, whether stylized or personalized, for redress and reconciliation of the past state violence. Stylized narratives are actively utilized to pursue state responsibilities for the past human rights violation in court. Some adjudication adopted them as evidence supporting the existence of state injustice. Individual narratives broke new grounds for interchange among people of different historical positions. They opened a forum, as South African TRC did, where voices of victimization be heard and shared. As for Korean *hibakusha*, they have made frequent meeting with Japanese *hibakusha* as well as those living in North and South America. Some *hibakusha* living in Brazil confessed his activities as a military police during the wartime in the forum. He testified willingly on behalf of Brazilian *hibakusha* in court that Korean *hibakusha* should be given the first priority to be compensated. This suggests directions for reconciliation among ordinary people. Socio-cultural studies in post-colonial East Asia would be expected to make a positive and practical contribution to reevaluate the great significance of the narrative of suffering and to organize people's forum for reconciliation by focusing on their narratives.

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